



ASH WEDNESDAY
February 17, 2021
Peace Lutheran Church

“You are dust, and to dust you shall return.” With this admission, the season of Lent begins for each follower of Jesus. A verbal confession of human mortality spoken over us, while our baptized foreheads are marked with ashes. Yet this ashen stain is purposeful. It is the sign of the cross on which Jesus gave His life in love for all human beings. An instrument of torture and death—of brutally enforced mortality—has become for all people a tree of everlasting life through the forgiveness of our sins.

INTRODUCTION

OPENING HYMN “Just As I Am”

KYRIE

Pastor: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: For the gift of divine peace and of pardon, with all our heart and with all our mind, let us pray to the Lord.

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: For the holy Christian Church, here and scattered throughout the world, and for the proclamation of the Gospel and the calling of all to faith, let us pray to the Lord.

People: **Lord, have mercy.**

Pastor: For this nation, for our cities and communities, and for the common welfare of us all, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For reasonable weather and for the fruitfulness of the earth, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For those who labor, for those whose work is difficult or dangerous, and for all who travel, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For all those in need, for the hungry and homeless, for the widowed and orphaned, and for all those in prison, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For the sick and dying and for all those who care for them, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: For these and for all our needs of body and soul, let us pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Pastor: Help, save, comfort, and defend us gracious Lord.

People: Amen.

IMPOSITION OF ASHES

Pastor: Since ancient times, ashes have symbolized contrition, Job confessed, "I.....repent in dust and ashes." They are also vivid reminders of our mortality: "For you are dust, and to dust you shall return." The imposition of ashes is a fitting beginning to the forty-day Lenten journey. Although powerfully speaking the Law, contrition, and mortality, ashes also speak the Gospel—applied in the shape of the cross, where sin and death were conquered by Jesus, and we are cleansed by the shedding of His blood. Each person present is invited to walk down the aisle and receive the imposition of ashes on their forehead as these words are spoken: "Dust you are, and to dust you shall return."

Each person present is invited to walk down the aisle and receive the imposition of ashes on their forehead. As the pastor says the words, "Dust you are, and to dust you shall return", the people may respond with "Amen". Then, return to your place and be seated until all have received the same.

SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, we admit we are but dust returning to dust, and yet You have breathed into our nostrils Your breath of life. Though we are signed in mortality with an ashen cross this day, You have nevertheless sealed us in Baptism with the sign of Jesus' own holy cross claiming us as Your own dear children. Renew in us the joy and promises of our baptismal identity as we follow Jesus this season of Lent; through Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

HOLY GOSPEL

Matthew 6: 1-6

(Jesus said) "Beware of practicing your righteousness before other people in order to be seen by them, for then you will have no reward from your Father who is in heaven.

"Thus, when you give to the needy, sound no trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may be praised by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

"And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

SERMON

"Taking off the Mask"

LORD'S PRAYER

BENEDICTION

DISMISSAL